

Response ID ANON-ZHJ3-CR55-X

Submitted to Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Derbyshire and Derby
Submitted on 2026-03-18 13:47:41

Tell us about yourself

1 What is your name?

Name:
Karen Hanson

2 Are you responding as an individual or providing an official response on behalf of an organisation?

Official response on behalf of an organisation

3 Are you providing the official response from a named consultee?

Yes

4 In which council area is your address? (if you are responding as an individual this is your home address. If you are responding as an organisation this is your organisation address)

Derbyshire County Council

5 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know the organisation's name:

Organisation:
Bolsover District Council

6 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know your position within the organisation:

Position in organisation::
Chief Executive

7 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the type of organisation from the options below:

Local government - principal council within the invitation area

8 What is your email address?

Email address::
karen.hanson@bolsover.gov.uk

Personal Data

1 Please read and tick the box before proceeding with the consultation

The sections for each proposal in this consultation include free text boxes where you can explain your answers. Please tick this box to confirm that you will not include information which may identify an individual in these boxes

Consultation on the Proposal from Derbyshire County Council

1 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Dropdown answers:
Strongly disagree

2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Dropdown answers:
Strongly disagree

3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Dropdown answers:
Strongly disagree

4 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

5 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

6 To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

7 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly disagree

8 If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-7 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Text box to add further comments:

A single unitary council for Derbyshire performs significantly worse than a two unitary model when judged against the Government's LGR criteria, because its sheer population size (over 1.1m) far exceeds the Government's guide of around 500,000 residents per unitary authority (Q1 / Q2).

The financial data shows that Derbyshire's councils already face severe and growing budget gaps. As a single unitary authority, it must absorb the full extent of countywide volatility. These cost pressures, together with escalating demand, create a heightened vulnerability in a one council model, because any financial shock would have a disproportionately large impact on a single organisation (Q3).

Derbyshire is characterised by its distinct and varied local identities and economic geographies. This results in a very mixed pattern of deprivation, growth, and resultant service demands across the area. A single 1.1m population unitary authority introduces service delivery demands across a large and varying urban / rural geography, which is contrary to Government's emphasis on manageable transition and maintaining safe services (Q4).

The proposal for a single unitary authority for all of Derbyshire was not the subject of consultation by its proposer and therefore local people have not been given the opportunity to properly comment on this (Q5).

A single unitary authority is oversized and subsequently does not align to functional economic areas. Therefore, housing strategies and economic growth opportunities will compete across the geography. A two unitary model will also maintain balanced constituent representation on the Combined Authority (Q6).

Overall at this scale democratic representation will be undermined, and communities will risk losing their identity, becoming disempowered / disadvantaged by poor democratic representation. Communities will be distanced from decision-making, especially across more rural areas, and therefore services will be less tailored to meet local needs (Q7).

9 I confirm that I have not provided any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Amber Valley Borough Council

1 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

4 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

5 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

6 To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

7 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Dropdown answers:

Somewhat agree

8 If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-7 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on the proposal.

Text box to add further comments:

Option A has been used as the base proposal to develop our favoured Option A1.

As a proposal that does not include a boundary modification we recognise that Option A is a lower risk two unitary model for Derbyshire that maintains the 'building blocks' of existing district / borough boundaries, whilst still delivering broadly similar levels of economic resilience to our favoured Option A1 (Q1 / Q3).

It is recognised that the results of the public consultation show strong support for Option A (Q5).

9 I confirm that I have not provided any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Bolsover District Council and North-East Derbyshire District Council

1 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

4 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

5 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

6 To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

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Dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

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Text box to add further comments:

In its suggested form as a two unitary proposal for Derbyshire A1 offers a more balanced, community sensitive and financially resilient refinement of the two unitary option for Derbyshire.

By dividing AVBC at parish level rather than assigning it wholly to one unitary, A1 strengthens alignment with lived communities and creates two authorities with a more balanced population (567k north / 511k south) which satisfies the Government's minimum 500,000 population requirement for unitaries (Q1).

By enabling Derby City to grow in all directions A1 addresses one of the key constraints identified in the base Proposal A, supporting housing expansion, infrastructure alignment and greater flexibility in economic planning (Q2).

Despite initial disaggregation, A1 remains a financially sound demonstrating its ability to pay back transitional costs by year 3.58. Alongside a more balanced GVA, tax base and population this will ensure that the new unitary councils under this model are on an equal footing to react to and demand-led shocks (Q3 / Q4).

Through public consultation Proposal A was the most supported option overall, and therefore patterns that emerged from the consultation results demonstrated that AVBC residents were highly engaged and deeply concerned about how reorganisation would affect long standing community ties. Feedback highlighted that southern AVBC communities naturally orient towards Derby City for work, services, and daily life, while northern communities identify more strongly with the rest of northern Derbyshire. This insight directly informed the decision to split AVBC at parish level, ensuring that "communities remain connected to the areas they naturally gravitate toward" and that local identity and lived experience were respected in the proposed boundaries. As a result, A1 is presented not only as a technical improvement on Proposal A, but as a community sensitive modification, explicitly reflecting what residents said mattered most: protecting functional geographies, maintaining community cohesion, and avoiding disruption to local identity (Q5).

A1 supports devolution by:

- Creating two balanced, resilient councils, enabling effective strategic partnership within EMCCA.
- Ensuring equal representation and influence, avoiding dominance by one area.
- Aligning geographies with functional economic and social patterns, supporting EMCCA's regional growth strategies.
- Improving capacity for long term planning, investment and collaboration on skills, transport, housing and climate priorities.

In short, A1 provides a stable, collaborative and strategically aligned governance structure that strengthens Derbyshire's collective voice within the East Midlands' devolved arrangements and ensures the region can fully benefit from the powers and funding that EMCCA unlocks (Q6).

The parish level restructuring also reinforces community identity and functional geography. Residents in the southern parishes of Amber Valley who naturally orient toward Derby for work, leisure and services would be represented within the southern unitary, while those with deeper cultural and economic ties to northern Derbyshire remain aligned with the northern authority (Q7). This configuration ensures democratic representation remains meaningful and accessible, with councillors serving communities of a manageable size so local voices continue to shape decision making (Q7).

9 This is a proposal that is accompanied by a request that the Secretary of State considers boundary change or that affects wider public services. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal sets out a strong public services and financial sustainability justification for boundary change?

Dropdown answers:

Strongly agree

10 If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 9.

Text box to add further comments:

The proposed boundary changes that form part of A1 use parish council geographies within AVBC to better align communities with service delivery patterns.

Financial analysis that has been undertaken to underpin the two unitary council model has been undertaken using the same framework across all two unitary options, and therefore the boundary change that is proposed is based upon a sustainable financial framework. This shows that despite the initial disaggregation costs of A1, the overall boundary modification ensures that the proposal supports greater service delivery, a more balanced tax base, and therefore the unitary geography will be more resilient to future financial pressures.

11 I confirm that I have not provided any information that identifies an individual in the free text boxes.

Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from Chesterfield Borough Council, Derby City Council, Erewash Borough Council, and High Peak Borough Council

1 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

4 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

5 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

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Dropdown answers:

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Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

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Text box to add further comments:

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Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

10 If you would like to, please use this free text box to explain your answer to question 9.

Text box to add further comments:

-

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Yes

Consultation on the Proposal from South Derbyshire District Council

1 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

2 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

3 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Dropdown answers:

Neither agree nor disagree

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Neither agree nor disagree

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Dropdown answers:

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Text box to add further comments:

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Yes